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BROWNBACK LEGISLATION TO AWARD CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL TO POPE JOHN PAUL II PASSES COMMITTEE

WASHINGTON – Today the Senate Banking Committee passed by voice-vote legislation (S.2453) introduced by U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback to award Pope John Paul II the Congressional Gold Medal. The bill will now go before the Senate for final passage.

“I am pleased by today’s vote in the Senate Banking Committee,” Brownback said. “It is fitting that we honor Pope John Paul II; he has been a tireless servant-leader for over two decades.

“Though many people see the pope as an important statesman, diplomat and political figure, Pope John Paul II is much more than that. As spiritual leader to the world’s one billion Catholics, the pope has commenced a great dialogue with modern culture, one that transcends the boundaries of political or economic ideology.

“He stands boldly as an ever vigilant sign of contradiction to a culture that is darkened by the clouds of death. In the face of this mounting storm, he has tirelessly proclaimed the need for a culture of life. The urgency of this message – the pope’s message – becomes more acute by the day; particularly at the beginning of the new millennium.

“The pope, having witnessed first-hand the brutal inhumanity of Nazi and Communist regimes, understands, in a way few of us can appreciate, the true dignity of each and every human being. He is a crusader against the offences against human dignity that have transpired in the twentieth century. More than any other single person this century, Pope John Paul II has worked to protect the rights of each individual. As well, John Paul II has addressed almost every major question posed by the modern mind at the turn of the millennium,” Brownback said.